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MAGNANIMOUS
LOVER**

By St. John G. Ervine

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THE MAGNANIMOUS
LOVER: A PLAY IN ONE
ACT BY ST. JOHN G. ERVINE
//

MAUNSEL & COMPANY, LTD.
DUBLIN AND LONDON

1912

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10-30-14

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

WILLIAM CATHER, *A Shoemaker.*

JANE CATHER, *His Wife.*

MAGGIE CATHER, *His Daughter.*

SAMUEL HINDE, *A Grocer.*

HENRY HINDE, *His Son.*

THE MAGNANIMOUS LOVER

The scene is laid in the kitchen and living-room of William Cather's cottage in the North-Irish village of Donaghbreagh. The room is large, and well-lighted by the two windows, through which the Irish Sea can be seen. The windows are tightly shut, and probably have never once been open since they were inserted in their frames; but this does not affect the ventilation of the room to any great extent, for the cottage door, which is in two sections, is always open either to its full extent or, as now, half open.

Immediately facing the street door, on the other side of the house, is a door leading to the best bedroom. The wall in which this bedroom door is placed terminates in another door which leads to the scullery and the garden at the back of the house. The space in this wall between the two doors is occupied by a large dresser, piled with crockery of many hues and shapes.

A large, round pot is suspended over the open fire which burns in the wall stretching between the front and the rear of the house, furthest from the street door. Over the mantel-shelf, on which are articles of cheap china, a clock and a tea-caddy, hangs a large oleograph showing King William the Third in the act of crossing the Boyne. On either side of this picture are two oblong mottoes printed in floral letters on a black background, the legends reading: "Thou God Seest Me," and, "What is Home Without A Mother."

Between the two windows is a large, unstained deal table above which hangs another oleograph, revealing the Secret of England's Greatness, and a further motto, "There's No Place like Home."

There are other mottoes scattered over the walls; some shield-shaped, some oblong, some circular, of smaller size than those already mentioned: all bearing texts from the

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Bible :—“ *What Shall It Profit a Man if He Gain the Whole World, and Lose His Own Soul.*” “ *Jesus Wept.*”
 “ *Blessed Are the Humble and Meek.*” “ *God Is Here.*”
It is the afternoon of a late summer day.

Samuel Hinde puts his head over the lower half-door, which is barred. There is no one in the kitchen.

SAMUEL HINDE. Are you in, Mrs. Cather.

MRS. CATHER (*speaking from the scullery*). Aye, indeed I am. (*She comes into the kitchen.*) Och, is that yourself, Sam! Sure, come on in.

SAMUEL HINDE (*unbarring the door, and entering*). I've something very important to say to you, Mrs. Cather. Very important.

MRS. CATHER. Have you, Sam?

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye. Where's William?

MRS. CATHER. Aw, he's down the garden. Will I call him.

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye, I wish you would.

MRS. CATHER (*calling at the scullery door*). Hi, William, come on in a minute.

WILLIAM CATHER (*answering from the garden*). What do you want?

MRS. CATHER. Come on in a minute. I want you.

WILLIAM CATHER. All right, I'm coming.

SAMUEL HINDE. Where's Maggie the day?

MRS. CATHER. Aw, she's over to Killisle; but sure she'll be back soon. Were you wanting her?

SAMUEL HINDE. Not just yet a wee while. It'll do later.

Enter William Cather, a lean, kindly man with a leathern apron bound round his loins.

WILLIAM CATHER. What do you want? (*Seeing Samuel Hinde.*) How are you, Sam?

SAMUEL HINDE. Sure, I'm rightly. I want to talk to you a minute. It's about Maggie.

MRS. CATHER. About Maggie?

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye. Henry's come back. By the two o'clock train.

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MRS. CATHER. Come back! (*Her voice hardens.*) Has he come back to make Maggie a respectable woman?

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye, he has.

MRS. CATHER. Oh, thank God!

WILLIAM CATHER. Sit down, will you, Sam?

SAMUEL HINDE. I will in a minute, but I'd better call Henry in first. He's just waiting round the corner.

WILLIAM CATHER. Aye, bring him in, will you.

Samuel Hinde goes to the door, and beckons to his son, Henry Hinde, who enters.

SAMUEL HINDE. Here's Henry, Mrs. Cather.

MRS. CATHER. How are you, Henry?

HENRY HINDE. I'm bravely, thank you. How is yourself?

MRS. CATHER. I'm brave and well, thank you. Sit down, will you.

WILLIAM CATHER. I'm glad to see you again, Henry.

HENRY HINDE. Thank you, Mr. Cather.

WILLIAM CATHER. Your father was saying something about you and Maggie, Henry!

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye, I was saying!

WILLIAM CATHER. Maybe, it would be better if Henry was to speak for himself, Sam.

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye, maybe it would.

HENRY HINDE. Mr. Cather, I did you a great wrong ten years ago.

WILLIAM CATHER. You did, Henry.

HENRY HINDE. And sorry I am for it.

WILLIAM CATHER. You could have been sorry sooner with advantage.

HENRY HINDE. I was headstrong and wayward, Mr. Cather. I was in the devil's grip; but a change has come over me. The old life has dropped away from me, and I've been washed in the Blood of the Lamb.

MRS. CATHER. Are you saved, Henry?

HENRY HINDE. Yes, thank God, I've been saved, Mrs. Cather. I was a wilful, hell-deserving sinner when I lived here. I wanted my own way in everything, and I

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didn't care about nobody else. The devil was in me. When I went to Liverpool, after the child was born, I led a wayward life ; but God was watching over me, and He saved me at last. I've got on, too, beyond my deserts. The Almighty's been very gracious to me. I've got a great deal to be thankful for.

WILLIAM CATHER. I'm glad to hear it, Henry. Maggie !

HENRY HINDE. It's about Maggie I've come back. Yesterday morning as I was contemplating God's goodness to me, I was wondering what I could do to show my gratitude to Him. I owe Him a great debt, and I want to pay Him back something. And I heard a voice within me, saying, Henry Hinde, you once did a woman a wrong. You left her with a bastard child !

MRS. CATHER. Aw, don't say the word, Henry !

HENRY HINDE. Isn't it true, Mrs. Cather ? Didn't I leave Maggie with a child that I was the father of ? I was headstrong in my sin, and I wouldn't marry her. My sin was deep, Mrs. Cather, and you can't make little of it. And when I heard the voice of God telling me to go back to the woman I had ruined and make her respectable, I just took the next boat from Liverpool, and I got to Belfast this morning, and I came here without a word of warning to anyone.

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye, you could have knocked me down with a feather when I saw him standing in the door. Sure, I thought it was a ghost.

HENRY HINDE. I felt it to be my duty to come back. Mind, it's not because I couldn't get anyone else. It's because it's the will of God. Not my will, O Lord, but Thine be done. I could marry a minister's daughter if I wanted to.

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye, a minister's daughter, mind you. Over in Liverpool. An Englishwoman.

HENRY HINDE. But I put all desires away from me, and came back to do the will of God.

MRS. CATHER (*weeping softly*). I thank God for this day.

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WILLIAM CATHER (*sullenly*). We've waited ten years for the voice of God to speak. Ten years is a long time, Henry.

HENRY HINDE. What is ten years to eternity ?

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye, indeed, what is it ?

HENRY HINDE. If I had not come back at the bidding of God, He might have damned my soul for ever. How was I to know that He wasn't testing me as with fire.

SAMUEL HINDE. Aw, that's true—that's true! Lord bless me, it would be a terrible thing to go to hell.

HENRY HINDE. Is the child all right ?

WILLIAM CATHER. Aye. He's running about the street somewhere.

SAMUEL HINDE. I was thinking myself the other day, he was a wee bit wild. Running about the street too much maybe. It's not good for a child to be running about the street much.

MRS. CATHER. Indeed, Sam Hinde, he's not running wild about the street. There's no child in Donaghreagh that's better looked after nor he is, for all he is—for all his mother's not married.

HENRY HINDE. I feel it's my duty to bring that child up in the fear of God. He came from the devil, and he must be given to God. Does Maggie go to church regular ?

MRS. CATHER. Not since her trouble, Henry.

HENRY HINDE. She has a soul to be saved, Mrs. Cather, and by the help of God I mean to save it. Aw, I'm glad I listened to His voice. I feel I shall be the instrument for much good in His hands.

WILLIAM CATHER. Do you mean to marry her ?

HENRY HINDE. I do. It's the will of God that I should.

SAMUEL HINDE. You know, he could marry a minister's daughter if he liked. Over in Liverpool there. And mind you, they're queer and particular in England.

WILLIAM CATHER. I daresay you're right, Sam, but that's not the question. The question is, what will Maggie say. You see Henry talks about his duty to

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God; but he doesn't say anything about his duty to Maggie. And after all, it was her that was wronged, not God. Not that I would make little of our duty to God. There's no man knows more about that duty nor I do. But we're men, Sam, you and Henry and me. Maggie's a woman, and women don't think so much of their duty to God as men do. It would be a bit awkward for some of us, if they did. You don't love Maggie, Henry?

SAMUEL HINDE. Och, man alive, didn't I tell you about the minister's daughter over in Liverpool? It's her he loves.

WILLIAM CATHER. Do you love her, Henry?

HENRY HINDE. As a fallen sister! . . .

WILLIAM CATHER. Do you love her as a man should love the woman he wants to marry?

HENRY HINDE. I'll do my duty by her. It's a debt I owe to God. I'll be a good husband to her, and I'll try to bring her to the paths of peace. Will she be long before she comes back?

MRS. CATHER. I don't know. She said she wouldn't be long. Maybe, she'll be back soon.

WILLIAM CATHER. I wonder if she'll have you, Henry. Women think more of loving a man nor they do of loving God. But you never know. I wish she was here.

HENRY HINDE. I hope she won't be long, for I must get back to Belfast to catch the boat for Liverpool the night. I can't leave the shop more nor a day.

SAMUEL HINDE. He's doing queer and well in the shop. Aren't you, Henry?

HENRY HINDE. Aye, the Lord has prospered me. I have two assistants and a vanman. The minister thinks a terrible lot of me. He took a fancy to me the minute he saw me in the chapel.

MRS. CATHER. Chapel! You've not turned a Catholic, are you?

HENRY HINDE. No, Mrs. Cather, I'm a Protestant, thank God. They call churches chapels in England unless they're Episcopalian places of worship. They call

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us Dissenters and Nonconformists, and they think far more of Catholics than they do of us.

MRS. CATHER. Heth, it must be the queer funny place.

HENRY HINDE. But Catholics have souls to be saved. the same as Protestants. We should never make little of them that has not been born so enlightened as ourselves.

MRS. CATHER. Aw, indeed, many's the time I've said that. Sure, there's good and bad alike in all religions.

HENRY HINDE. There's no bad in my religion, Mrs. Cather. There's no room for bad where God is.

MRS. CATHER. Aw, well, maybe you're right.

HENRY HINDE. I am.

MRS. CATHER. But sure, it's not worth fighting about. Maybe, we're all wrong. You never know.

WILLIAM CATHER. I wish Maggie was here till we tell her.

MRS. CATHER. I hope she'll have you all right, Henry.

SAMUEL HINDE. Have him! Of course, she'll have him! She's not daft, is she?

HENRY HINDE. She's not in a position to choose, Mrs. Cather. A woman that's had a bastard! . . .

MRS. CATHER. Aw, don't say it, Henry!

WILLIAM CATHER. You were it's father anyway. If there's no choosing for her, there's no choosing for you.

HENRY HINDE. There's no choosing for either of us. It's the will of God.

SAMUEL HINDE. But all the same she gets the best of it. Look at him—look at the way he's dressed. Like any gentleman! And him got a shop, and two assistants, and a vanman, and could marry a minister's daughter if he liked. I don't think there's much doubt about who's being favoured by the Almighty.

WILLIAM CATHER. Maybe, Sam, maybe. (*He goes to the door and looks out anxiously.*)

MRS. CATHER. Will you be married soon, Henry?

HENRY HINDE. As soon as possible. I'll tell Mr. Macmillan the night before I go, and I'll come over again in a month's time, and marry her.

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WILLIAM CATHER. Here's Maggie now.

HENRY HINDE. I'm glad to hear it.

Maggie Cather enters, wearing a plaid shawl over her head. She enters hurriedly, throwing the shawl aside as she does so. She does not see Henry Hinde at first.

MAGGIE CATHER (*to Samuel Hinde*). Is that you, Mr. Hinde? (*She sees Henry*). Henry! (*There is a short, painful pause, but she recovers herself.*) I hope you're well.

HENRY HINDE. I'm well enough, thank you.

MRS. CATHER. What kept you, Maggie. You're queer and long getting back.

MAGGIE CATHER. I was kept longer nor I thought. I hurried home as quick as I could. (*To Henry.*) I suppose you're over for your holidays.

WILLIAM CATHER. Maggie, dear, Henry's come back.

MAGGIE CATHER. So I see, father.

WILLIAM CATHER. He's come back to make you an offer.

MAGGIE CATHER. A what?

WILLIAM CATHER. He wants to marry you.

She looks from one to the other like one who does not quite understand what is being said. Then she turns away, laughing.

MRS. CATHER. What are you laughing for anyway? Sure, it's in earnest he is.

MAGGIE CATHER. Henry, is it true you've come back to marry me?

HENRY HINDE. Aye, it is. And now you know, I'll just go and tell the minister to arrange for the wedding I've got to catch the boat back to Liverpool the night, and I haven't much time to lose.

MAGGIE CATHER. It's ten years since you went away, Henry.

HENRY HINDE. It is.

MAGGIE CATHER. And now you've come back to marry me.

HENRY HINDE. Aye. I'll be back in a month's time for the wedding.

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MAGGIE CATHER (*pointing, with sudden fury, to her mother*). Henry Hinde, do you see that old woman?

HENRY HINDE. Aye, I do.

MAGGIE CATHER. Do you remember nothing about her? Do you not mind her and me meeting you one night in the Cregagh Loaning before the child was born?

HENRY HINDE. Aye, I think I do.

MAGGIE CATHER. Do you mind her begging you to marry me?

HENRY HINDE. Aye.

MAGGIE CATHER (*the fury still in her voice*). Do you mind her going down on her knees to you, and begging you for the love of God to marry me? Do you mind me pleading with you, too?

HENRY HINDE. Aye, I do, but what does that matter?

MAGGIE CATHER. Do you mind what you said to us, Henry?

HENRY HINDE. No, I forget.

MAGGIE CATHER. You said I was a bad woman, and you weren't going to marry a whore!

MRS. CATHER (*whimpering*). Maggie, for God's sake don't bring it all up again.

HENRY HINDE. Aye, I do mind that.

MAGGIE CATHER. If I was one then, Henry, I'm one now. I'm just as you left me.

HENRY HINDE. I'm not asking what you are. I know what you are, and I know what I am too. I know what we all are before God—hell-deserving sinners. I've not come back for what you are. I've come back to marry you because it's the will of God.

MAGGIE CATHER. Well, it's not my will, then.

SAMUEL HINDE. Not your will. Woman, you musn't set yourself up against God.

MAGGIE CATHER. I'm not setting myself up against God. I'm setting myself up against Henry.

MRS. CATHER. Maggie, dear, hold your tongue, and talk sense. Sure, it's all for the best.

WILLIAM CATHER. Leave her alone.

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MAGGIE CATHER. Me and my mother did to you, Henry, what no woman should ever do to any man—we went down on our knees to you. Do you hear that? I pleaded with you to save me from shame, and you wouldn't. You ran away, and left me to face it myself. It wasn't easy to face either. My God, when I think of it! I couldn't go to the Sabbath-school nor the meeting. Everybody knew I was going to have a child, and I wasn't married. I used to pretend there was nothing the matter with me. . . . Once the minister preached an awful sermon about the woman taken in sin. Aw, I felt that every eye in the place was on me. There was no pity, no mercy.

HENRY HINDE. Think of the mercy of God, Maggie.

MAGGIE CATHER. I couldn't see it. I could only see the disgrace and the shame.

MRS. CATHER. Aw, but don't think of it, Maggie. Sure, it's all over, now. Henry'll marry you, and you'll be all right again.

MAGGIE CATHER. I won't, I tell you, I won't. I'm not going to marry him.

SAMUEL HINDE. Maggie Cather, you must be out of your mind. Do you know he's got a shop, and two assistants, and a vanman?

MAGGIE CATHER. I don't care if he's got fifty shops, and fifty thousand vanmen, I won't marry him.

WILLIAM CATHER (*soothingly*). Maggie!

SAMUEL HINDE. Aye, and he could marry a minister's daughter if he liked.

HENRY HINDE. Aw, hold your wheesht, father. Maggie, there's no one knows better nor I do what I've done. You've good reason to be angry and bitter, but I've not come back to make excuses. I'm a guilty sinner the same as you are, but I've been saved. Thank God for that! I've had a call from the Father, and I must answer the call at my soul's peril.

MAGGIE CATHER. You've not come back because you love me, then?

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HENRY HINDE. The lusts of the flesh!

MAGGIE CATHER. Aw, stop, stop, man, stop. I want none of your religion.

MRS. CATHER. Maggie, dear!

WILLIAM CATHER. Leave her alone.

SAMUEL HINDE. I must say I don't think your manners is very genteel, Maggie Cather.

MAGGIE CATHER. Listen, Henry Hinde. All the time you were away in Liverpool where nobody knew you, I was here where everybody knew me. Do you know what that means? People staring at me, and turning up their noses at me? There was nothing but contempt for me at first. I was a bad woman, and I wasn't asked nowhere. Fellows in the street treated me like dirt beneath their feet. They spoke to me as if I was a bad woman. And all the time you were in Liverpool, and were thought a lot of. It wasn't fair. And it wasn't me only. I mind once I was coming down an entry, and I saw a lot of children tormenting the child. He was standing in the middle of them, and they were making him say things after them. I heard them saying, "What are you, Willie?" And then they made him say, "I'm a wee bastard!" Aw, if I could have laid hands on you then, Henry, I would have throttled you.

MRS. CATHER. But sure it's all over now.

MAGGIE CATHER. Aye, they don't treat me with contempt now. I've lived that down. They just pity me now. Sometimes when I go past their doors, an old woman'll hear me passing, and ask who it is, and they always say, "It's only poor Maggie Cather." I could thole their contempt better nor their pity, but I didn't run away from either of them. I faced it all, and I've brought up the child as good as any of them. And now when I've bore the hardest of it, you come back to marry me. Maybe, you'll be ordering me about, and bossing the child. I'm to do what you tell me. I've to love, honour and obey you. What for, Henry, that's what I'd like to know.

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HENRY HINDE. I've come back at the command of God.

WILLIAM CATHER. Maggie, dear, maybe you don't understand it all. You'd better think it over a bit.

MAGGIE CATHER. I understand perfectly, father.

WILLIAM CATHER. Aye, but wait a bit, Maggie. There's more in it nor you think. The lad's getting big, you know, and the time'll soon be here when you'll lose your hold on him. You know, Maggie, every woman loses her grip on her man or her child some time or other, and it just depends on wee things whether they ever get it back again. The child needs a man to look after him.

MAGGIE CATHER. Aren't you good enough for him?

WILLIAM CATHER. I'm too old. Old men are worse nor old women for controlling young people. You are never controlled so well as you are by someone near your own age. He'll be leaving school in a year or two, and neither you nor me'll be any younger then. You want a man to look after him.

MRS. CATHER. Aye, dear, indeed you do.

MAGGIE CATHER. I can look after him myself.

WILLIAM CATHER. No, you can't. Not when he finds things out. It's the between age, Maggie, when men is neither boys nor men—the only time when men never cling to women. It's the time they go quickest to the devil.

HENRY HINDE. I was thinking myself of giving the lad a good schooling over in Liverpool. I had a feeling as I was coming over in the boat that maybe if I was to have the child trained for a minister, he could wipe out some of the debt I owe to God.

MRS. CATHER. Do you hear that, Maggie! Henry's going to make a minister of Willie. Sure, the child'll be a credit to you yet.

MAGGIE CATHER. He's a credit to me now.

WILLIAM CATHER. Aye, Maggie, he is.

SAMUEL HINDE. I'm sure it's queer and considerate of Henry considering what he might do.

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MAGGIE CATHER. If I was to marry you, Henry, would you treat the child the same as you would one that was not a—not a

HENRY HINDE. I'll treat him just the same as if he was a child of God instead of a child of sin.

MAGGIE CATHER (*bitterness returning to her voice*). It wasn't his fault.

HENRY HINDE. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

MAGGIE CATHER. Aye, and you'll take damned good care my child doesn't escape. You'll hurt him, and say it's the will of God!

SAMUEL HINDE. Maggie Cather, your language is most unbecoming!

HENRY HINDE. She is possessed of a devil, father. Leave her to me. I'll save her soul by the help of God.

MRS. CATHER. Maggie, dear, say you'll have him.

WILLIAM CATHER. It'll be all right for the child, Maggie.

MAGGIE CATHER. I'll think about it.

HENRY HINDE. I must know now. It's not me you're answering, it's God Himself. You can't put God off.

WILLIAM CATHER. Maybe, if we were to leave Maggie to talk it over with you alone, Henry, you could both come to a decision. Jane and me'll just show your father a shed I'm putting up in the garden for the leather. Come on, Sam.

SAMUEL HINDE (*jovially*). Aye, indeed, William, that's the queer good notion of yours. I was just going to make it myself. Aw, you know, when a man and a woman get together, sure, they like to be alone. It's a queer thing when you come to think it over; but there it is. Och, aye! human beings is a funny lot, William, they are that. Well, well, let's go and have a look at your shed.

Exit Samuel by the scullery.

MRS. CATHER. Maggie, dear, you'll take him, won't you? Don't be proud with him. Men can't stand pride,

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Maggie. Just take him, dear, and he'll make you a respectable woman again.

WILLIAM CATHER. Come on, woman, come on. All right, Maggie, all right.

They go out together.

HENRY HINDE. Maggie, I haven't much time.

MAGGIE CATHER. Did you ever love me, Henry ?

HENRY HINDE. I suppose I liked you, Maggie.

MAGGIE CATHER. But you don't love me now ?

HENRY HINDE. It's ten years since I saw you last.

MAGGIE CATHER. Do you love this minister's daughter, your father was talking about ?

HENRY HINDE. That's neither here nor there, Maggie. When God tells to put our desires aside, we've got to bow our heads and say, Thy Will, O Lord, not ours, be done.

MAGGIE CATHER. Is she a good woman ?

HENRY HINDE. Aye, she is.

MAGGIE CATHER. She never had a child.

HENRY HINDE. No, she's a good woman.

MAGGIE CATHER. She's worthy of you, maybe.

HENRY HINDE. Aye, she is. She's worthy of any good man.

MAGGIE CATHER. And I suppose I'm not worthy of you.

HENRY HINDE. You have fallen short of the glory of God.

MAGGIE CATHER. We both fell at the same time, Henry.

HENRY HINDE. I'm saved and you're not. I'm in a state of grace, and you're in a state of sin.

MAGGIE CATHER. Then I'm not as good as you are ?

HENRY HINDE. No, you're not.

MAGGIE CATHER. If I was saved, too, would I be as good as you are ?

HENRY HINDE. That's for God to say, Maggie, not me.

MAGGIE CATHER. Do you think I'd be as good as you. Leave God out of it for a minute. If I committed a sin, you committed one, too.

HENRY HINDE. I'm not denying it.

MAGGIE CATHER. Aye, but you think I'm a bigger

sinner nor you were ; and if I was saved, too, you'd still think I was worse nor you, wouldn't you ?

HENRY HINDE. I would.

MAGGIE CATHER. Why would you ?

HENRY HINDE. Because you're a woman. Because it was through women that sin first came into the world to damn the souls of men. Because it's women that keeps sin in the world with their shameful, lustful bodies. God Himself came down from Heaven to save men from their sins, and suffered the pangs of hell that they might be saved, and sin be swept out of the world. But man turns from the high God to the low woman to his own damnation, and God may weep in His Heaven for the souls of men for ever, and no man will heed Him. Aw, the sin and the shame that women have brought into the world ! Every soul that writhes in hell was sent there by a woman.

MAGGIE CATHER. You want to marry me, Henry ?

HENRY HINDE. Because its a debt I owe to God. If I could save your soul I'd be paying Him back.

MAGGIE CATHER. And if I don't marry you ?

HENRY HINDE. I shall have tried all the same. I can do no more.

MAGGIE CATHER. Henry, you're worse nor I thought you. You're not thinking of me, nor the wrong you did. It's yourself you're thinking of. You're afraid of God, and you want to use me to buy Him off. You can well call yourself a God-fearing man, Henry. I'm nothing to you. The child you're the father of is nothing to you. You're just frightened out of your wits for fear you should go to hell for all you're saved. I won't marry you. I'm as good as you are for all I'm not saved. I'm better nor you are, for I'm not afraid of God. (*She goes to the door leading to the scullery.*) Come on in, will you.

Samuel, Jane and William enter in the order named.

MRS. CATHER. Have you took him, yet ?

MAGGIE CATHER. No. Father, I've decided not to marry Henry.

The Magnanimous Lover

WILLIAM CATHER. You're sure, Maggie ?

MAGGIE CATHER. I am, father.

WILLIAM CATHER. Maybe, you know best, Maggie.

MRS. CATHER. William Cather, will you stand there and let your daughter make a fool of herself ?

SAMUEL HINDE. I must say I think you're right, Mrs. Cather.

WILLIAM CATHER. We don't want to know what you think, Sam. Jane, you needn't say any more.

MRS. CATHER. I will say more. I've been patient all these years, and said nothing, but I'll be patient no more. We're a shamed family. Yes, we are. A bastard in the house ! There never was no shame in my family, no, nor yours either, William Cather, before Maggie.

WILLIAM CATHER. Well, well, it can't be helped.

MRS. CATHER. And when she has a chance of putting herself right, and making a respectable woman of herself, she hangs back, and won't take it. And you stand by, and let her do it.

MAGGIE CATHER. I am a respectable woman.

MRS. CATHER. You're not, you know you're not. You're a bad woman, you know you are. Maybe, if the truth was known, you led this good man into the trouble !

WILLIAM CATHER. Hold your tongue, woman ! My God, if you speak like that, I'll strike you down.

MRS. CATHER. I'm your wife, William Cather, and I've been a good wife to you, too. I've submitted to you in everything since we were married. I've stood by, and bore cuts from people that was lower-born nor me because of Maggie. I've stood them without saying anything because you told me to. But I hoped and prayed to God that some day Henry'd come back, and make her a respectable woman again. I was that glad when he came in with Sam, and said he'd marry her !—and now,—aw, William, William, make her marry him. Henry, you'll take her still, won't you ?

HENRY HINDE. Aye, I'll take her still.

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SAMUEL HINDE. I'm sure it's very magnanimous of you, Henry, after the way you've been treated.

WILLIAM CATHER. It's for Maggie to say, not for me.

MRS. CATHER. Ask her again, Henry.

HENRY HINDE. Maggie Cather, I solemnly ask you before God your Maker, to marry me.

MAGGIE CATHER. No.

HENRY HINDE. I'll give you another chance, Maggie. Will you marry me ?

MAGGIE CATHER. No.

SAMUEL HINDE. Well, I suppose there's nothing for it, but to go home. It's a pity you wasted your money coming over, Henry.

MRS. CATHER. No, don't go yet, Henry. Give her time to think it over. When she sees the child she'll change her mind. I'll go and get him.

WILLIAM CATHER. Stay where you are.

HENRY HINDE. Maggie, for the last time, will you marry me ?

MAGGIE CATHER. Am I as good as you ?

HENRY HINDE. You know what I said before. Will you marry me ?

MAGGIE CATHER. No, no, no.

HENRY HINDE. Very well, then, Maggie, I'll just say good-bye.

SAMUEL HINDE. That's your last chance, my lady. You'll get no more. Heth, you're a fine one to be putting on airs. Anyone would think you were a decent woman by the way you talk.

WILLIAM CATHER. Samuel Hinde, if you don't want to be hurried before your Maker before your time, you'll get out of this house without another word.

SAMUEL HINDE. Aw, indeed. I like the conceit of you. That man could buy and sell you and your daughter twice over, and not notice it. He's a gentleman, and could marry the daughter of a minister, but he's good enough to come and offer to marry the daughter of a

cobbler that's disgraced herself ; and he's treated like dirt. A man that has a shop and two assistants !

WILLIAM CATHER. Aye, we heard all that before, Sam. You needn't wait any longer.

SAMUEL HINDE. Come on, Henry. Sure, you're only demeaning yourself here.

HENRY HINDE. I came here to do the will of God. I've done my best. (*He shuts his eyes and prays.*) Lord, Thou knowest the weakness of Thy servant. If I have failed to move this sinful woman's heart through lustful desires after another, forgive me, O Lord, for Thy Name's Sake. Amen. I'll say good-bye, to you, William. If we should never meet on this side of eternity, I would bid you consider this. What Shall It Profit A Man if He Gain the Whole World and Lose His Own Soul. Good-bye to you all.

Samuel and Henry Hinde go out together.

MAGGIE CATHER. Was I wrong, father ?

WILLIAM CATHER. God only knows, Maggie.

MRS. CATHER. It's a sin, it's a sin. To throw away the chance of being respectable.

MAGGIE CATHER. There isn't much difference between you and me, mother. You've had a child, and so have I.

MRS. CATHER. I'm a married woman.

MAGGIE CATHER. You've only been to the minister, and I haven't. There's not much difference between us. Maybe, I'm a better woman nor you. I had a son, and you only had a girl.

MRS. CATHER (*in dreadful fury as though she would strike her daughter*). How dare you ? How dare you make a mock of me ?

WILLIAM CATHER. Jane, woman, you forget yourself. You're an old woman. You shouldn't be so bitter, Maggie.

MRS. CATHER. Why wouldn't you marry him ? Wasn't he good enough ?

MAGGIE CATHER. He was too good. If you heard what

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he said to me. He said I was a sinful, lustful woman, and could never be as good as he is. It wasn't me he was thinking of; it was himself. I'm not needing to marry, but if I do, I'll marry to save my own soul, and not Henry Hinde's.

WILLIAM CATHER. Aw, well, dear, it doesn't matter about Henry. Maybe, you were right not to have him. *(He pats her affectionately on the shoulder.)*

MAGGIE CATHER. I hope I was, father.

WILLIAM CATHER. I hope so, dear. You never know.

(He goes out through the scullery door to the garden. Maggie takes up her shawl, and goes into the bedroom, leaving Mrs. Cather weeping by the fire.)

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“ The Magnanimous Lover ” was first played at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, October 17th, 1912, with the following caste :

JANE CATHER	<i>Mon Beirne</i>
WILLIAM CATHER	<i>Sydney G. Morgan</i>
SAMUEL HINDE	<i>J. A. O'Rourke</i>
HENRY HINDE	<i>J. M. Kerrigan</i>
MAGGIE CATHER	<i>Maire O'Neill</i>

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